



ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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ZBA 2012-16
Petition of Brookline Bank
448 Washington Street

Record Owner of Property: Wellesley Plaza Ltd Partnership c/o Gravestar Inc.

Pursuant to due notice, the Special Permit Granting Authority held a Public Hearing on Thursday, March 1, 2012, at 7:30 p.m. in the Juliani Meeting Room, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, on the petition of BROOKLINE BANK requesting a Special Permit pursuant to the provisions of Section XXIIA and Section XXV of the Zoning Bylaw for installation of two 16 inch by 12 foot halo lit wall signs with 16 inch letters, at 448 WASHINGTON STREET, in a Business A District.

On February 13, 2012, the Petitioner filed a request for a hearing before this Authority, and thereafter, due notice of the hearing was given by mailing and publication.

The hearing was continued to March 22, 2012.

March 22, 2012

The Board said that, because one of the members who sat at the previous hearing was unable to attend, the petition would be heard de novo.

Presenting the case at the hearing were Ed Spinney, SignArt, and Andrew Schieffelin, Brookline Bank.

Mr. Spinney said that they changed their initial request for 16 inch letters for the signs on the front and the side of the building. He said that the letter height has been reduced to 14 inches, which will comply with Zoning Bylaw requirements. He said that the request is for the second sign.

The Board said that the submittal that had gone before the Design Review Board (DRB) was for the letters against the brick. The Board said that the Applicant subsequently asked to add a backer board. The Board said that it cannot make a decision until the DRB has reviewed the revised proposal.

Mr. Spinney said that backer boards are allowed by-right if they meet the dimensional requirements of the Zoning Bylaw.

Mr. Spinney displayed a sample of the proposed sign with the backer (retained by proponent). He said that the backer will be aluminum.

The Board said that the proposed sign will face the eastbound traffic on Washington Street. The Board questioned if the sign will be visible when the tree is leafed out.

The Board said that the sign can only be illuminated during hours of operation.

The Board said that it preferred the appearance of the letters on the brick. The Board said that the letters will only be lit approximately 10 percent of the year. The Board expressed concerns about the effect of the lights on an aluminum backer.

Mr. Spinney said that Brookline Bank's sign will not be going onto the standing sign on Washington Street because the letters would be too small to read.

The Board said that the bank is a destination type of business. The Board said that people who are coming to the bank will know where all of the branches are. Mr. Schieffelin said that they have had visibility issues with a branch in Brookline that has been at its location for 35 years. He said that customers tend to not know about that location. He said that the request for the second sign is for visibility of this branch.

Mr. Schieffelin asked about reverting to the original appeal. He said that there were two issues; one was the letter size and the other was the second sign. The Board said that it would not support the request for oversized letters.

There was no one present at the Public Hearing who wished to speak to the petition.

Statement of Facts

The Petitioner is requesting a Special Permit for installation of two 14 inch by 12 foot halo lit wall signs with 14 inch letters, at 448 WASHINGTON STREET, in a Business A District.

Owner Authorization Letter, dated 1/27/12, signed by Michael E. Doherty, Senior Manager, Construction and Project Management, Gravestar, Inc., sign dimension plan, dated 1/25/12, photosimulations, dated 1/25/12, General Specs. for Mounting Reverse Lit Letters, dated 1/25/12, and dimensioned photosimulation, dated 2/1/12, prepared by Ed Spinney, were submitted.

On February 8, 2012, the Design Review Board voted to recommend that the Zoning Board of Appeals approve the proposed project with the condition that the letter heights on both signs not exceed fourteen (14) inches.

On February 28, 2011, the Planning Board reviewed the petition and recommended that the Special Permit be denied.

Decision

This Authority has made a careful study of the materials submitted and the information presented at the hearing. The subject sign will be a 14 inch by 12 foot halo lit wall sign with 14 inch letters with a total

area of 14.4 square feet. The proposed sign on the side of the building, in combination with the by-right sign at the front of the building, will exceed the number of signs allowed.

It is the opinion of this Authority that installation of a 14 inch by 12 foot halo lit wall sign with 14 inch letters with a total area of 14.4 square feet, that in combination with the by-right sign at the front of the building, will exceed the number of signs allowed, will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of Section XXIIA of the Zoning Bylaw, as the sign scale will be will in reasonable relation to development scale, viewer distance and travel speed, and sign sizes on nearby structures; sign size, shape, and placement will serve to define or enhance architectural elements of the building and will not unreasonably interrupt, obscure or hide them; sign design will be in reasonable continuity with the mounting location, height, proportions and materials of other signage on the same or adjacent structures; sign materials, colors, lettering style, illumination and form are reasonably compatible with building design, neighborhood context and use; and sign size, location design and illumination are not judged to present a safety hazard to vehicular or pedestrian traffic.

Therefore, a Special Permit is granted for installation of a 14 inch by 12 foot halo lit wall sign with 14 inch letters with a total area of 14.4 square feet, with no backer board.

The Inspector of Buildings is hereby authorized to issue a permit for the sign upon receipt and approval of a sign application and any other materials he may require. No sign shall be installed until said permit has been issued.

APPEALS FROM THIS DECISION,
IF ANY, SHALL BE MADE PURSUANT
TO GENERAL LAWS, CHAPTER 40A,
SECTION 17, AND SHALL BE FILED
WITHIN 20 DAYS AFTER THE DATE
OF FILING OF THIS DECISION IN THE
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK.

Richard L. Seegel, Chairman

David G. Sheffield

Walter B. Adams

cc: Planning Board
Inspector of Buildings
lrm